

CONTEXT

Introductory Remarks on the Conditions for Human Security

Amb. Dr Pierre Helg

Deputy Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs



'The Swiss government is proud to support the Caux Forum and *Initiatives of Change*.

One condition for human security on which this Forum will focus is the healing of memories arising from painful past experiences. For Switzerland this topic is very important as we believe that a systematic approach to dealing with the past can help societies work their way back to normality after conflict.'

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here in this magnificent setting in Caux for the Third Annual Forum for Human Security organized by *Initiatives of Change*. On behalf of the Swiss government, I wish to congratulate the organizers for their continued effort in bringing together practitioners from the realms of diplomacy, economy, culture, science and the media, including representatives of grass-roots organizations as well as high-level officials. I am impressed by the long and remarkable guest list which reflects the importance that participants from across the world attach to this event. It is my pleasure to welcome you all to Switzerland.

The Swiss government is proud to support the Caux Forum and *Initiatives of Change*. Our support dates back to 2005 when the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to cooperate with *Initiatives of Change* in the context of its activities in Burundi. Since then, our partnership has expanded and deepened, and with good reason: the focus on dialogue among different actors and the integration of different components of human security correspond to the principles of Switzerland's peace policy.

We particularly welcome the comprehensive view of human security adopted by the Forum. Human security has to be dealt with from a broad perspective and by means of a multidisciplinary approach which encompasses numerous actors at different levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, the Caux Forum on Human Security will seek practical remedies to the human security challenges analyzed in the two previous forums. The reflection and discussions will focus on the following four main topics:

- Healing memories that arise from painful past experiences
- Enabling more just governance at all levels
- Mitigating the distrust that obstructs progress towards environmental sustainability
- Advancing an inclusive global economy

These four topics are basically the main conditions that have to be taken into account in order to advance the concept of human security and its implementation on the ground.

Let me try to give a picture of where we stand today in terms of human security, and of what could and should be done, from a Swiss perspective, to improve the situation.

Let me start by shortly going back to the history of the concept and its meaning. The notion of human security emerged in the early 90s as a response to the limitations of the traditional understanding of security which is first and foremost concerned with so-called "hard" security. In other words, it is state-centred and focuses on territorial integrity and borders.

In contrast, human security puts the individual human being at the centre of attention. Switzerland is of the opinion that the concept of human security should complement the traditional understanding of security, since it covers issues and concerns which may not be directly addressed through instruments devised to guarantee state security.

The concept of human security can be pictured as the handle and ribs of an umbrella, whereas the fabric actually protecting us from the adverse elements represents the concrete policies, mechanisms and instruments implemented to make a difference on the ground.

In this way, human security in itself is not understood as an operational policy. It is rather to be seen as an ethical precept guiding foreign policy in all relevant areas - or even simpler, as a political framework putting a new emphasis on foreign policy.

There are two definitions of human security:

- The broad understanding of human security, on the one hand, combines "freedom from fear" with "freedom from want". Thus, it encompasses development, security, peace, humanitarian and human rights policies. The proponents of this approach argue that poverty, hunger, disease and the consequences of natural disasters are as big a threat to security as armed violence or political persecution.
- The narrow understanding of human security, on the other hand, focuses on violent threats to individuals such as armed conflict or human rights violations and their consequences in terms of political violence, arbitrary treatment, the use of landmines, sexual violence, internal displacement and human trafficking. In short, human security is about removing the use or the threat of force and violence from peoples' daily lives. This is what "freedom from fear" is about.

However, the two approaches are mutually reinforcing and stipulate that there is no security and wellbeing without freedom from fear and freedom from want for each and everyone.

In its foreign policy, Switzerland takes both understandings of human security into account. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SOC) promotes human security primarily through its efforts in poverty alleviation, health and good governance programmes.

The Foreign Ministry's Directorate of Political Affairs, in turn, contributes to human security in its other sense through conflict transformation and the promotion of human rights. It focuses specifically on issues such as anti-personnel mines, small arms and light weapons, child soldiers, engagement with armed non-state actors, forced displacement, human trafficking as well as gender-related issues.

The various consequences of economic crises, climate change, conflicts and bad governance on the lives of people around the world show us today that the response to contemporary threats to human

security cannot be limited to foreign policy. It has to include not only development and peace policy, but also international security policy. Moreover, the transnational nature of the threats and challenges in question cannot be addressed by one state alone. They clearly call for collective action.

All relevant actors, ranging from the United Nations and other international and regional organisations to national governments, civil society organisations and the private sector, bear responsibility for ensuring that we do more than just crisis management and start moving towards a sustainable policy.

In Switzerland's vision, human security is intrinsically linked to a stable and peaceful environment. This concept of peace includes much more than political stability and the absence of violence in the short term, even though these elements are of great importance. Rather, peace should also be secured in the long term through sustainable development, social justice, respect for human rights and democracy. The Swiss people hold these values dear and have enshrined them in the Federal Constitution.

Allow me to give you a few examples of the Swiss engagement in improving human security:

1) Agenda for Human Rights

Firstly, in 2008, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an Agenda for Human Rights was designed with the support of Switzerland. One of its recommendations is a call for a Global Fund for National Human Rights Protection Systems, which would help improve governance and a better functioning of the judiciary. This, in turn, can play a significant role in diffusing tensions and thereby contribute to the prevention of armed violence and conflict.

The Agenda for Human Rights also emphasises the notion of "shared responsibilities" by various actors. For example, the responsibility for human rights violations may not always lie with the state, but can include non-state actors as well. To achieve effective protection, the shared responsibilities of different stakeholders, including international organisations, intergovernmental bodies and non-state actors (including private enterprises), must be further clarified at the international level.

Finally, the Agenda for Human Rights calls for a World Court of Human Rights, which could play an important role in making actors more accountable, thus advancing the efforts to fight impunity.

2) "Who cares wins"

Secondly, Switzerland supported, in collaboration with the UN and the financial industry, an initiative entitled "Who cares wins". It aimed at supporting the financial industry's efforts to integrate environmental, social and governance issues into mainstream investment decision-making and ownership practices. Its final report emphasised the